

NATIONAL DIFFICULTIES.

RESOLUTIONS

OF

THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE,

RELATIVE TO

The present condition of national affairs, and suggesting certain amendments to the Constitution.

JANUARY 28, 1861.—Laid upon the table, and ordered to be printed.

1. *Resolved by the general assembly of Tennessee*, That a convention of delegates from all the slaveholding States should assemble at Nashville, Tennessee, or such other place as a majority of the States co-operating may designate, on the 4th day of February, to digest and define bases upon which, if possible, the federal Union and the constitutional rights of the slave States may be preserved and perpetuated.

2. *Resolved*, That the general assembly of Tennessee appoint a number of delegates to said convention, of our ablest and wisest men, equal to our whole delegation in Congress; and that the governor of Tennessee immediately furnish copies of these resolutions to the governors of the slaveholding States, and urge the participation of such States in said convention.

3. *Resolved*, That in the opinion of the general assembly of Tennessee, such plan of adjustment should embrace the following propositions as amendments to the Constitution of the United States:

First. A declaratory amendment that African slaves, as held under the institutions of the slaveholding States, shall be recognized as property, and entitled to the *status* of other property in the States where slavery exists, in all places within the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress in the slave States, in all the Territories south of 36° 30', in the District of Columbia, in transit, and while temporarily sojourning with the owner in the non-slaveholding States and Territories north of 36° 30'; and, when fugitives from the owner, in the several places above named, as well as in all places, in the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress in the non-slaveholding States.

Second. That in all the territory now owned, or which may be hereafter acquired by the United States, south of the parallel of $36^{\circ} 30'$, African slavery shall be recognized as existing, and be protected by all the departments of the federal and territorial government; and in all north of that line, now owned or to be acquired, it shall not be recognized as existing. And whenever States formed out of any of said territory south of said line, having a population equal to that of a congressional district, shall apply for admission into the Union, the same shall be admitted as slave States; while States north of the line, formed out of said territory and having a population equal to a congressional district, shall be admitted without slavery. But the States formed out of said territory, north and south, having been admitted as members of the Union, shall have all the powers over the institution of slavery possessed by the other States of the Union.

Third. Congress shall have no power to abolish slavery in places under its exclusive jurisdiction, and situate within the limits of States that permit the holding of slaves.

Fourth. Congress shall have no power to abolish slavery within the District of Columbia as long as it exists in the adjoining States of Virginia and Maryland, or either, nor without the consent of the inhabitants, nor without just compensation made to such owners of slaves as do not consent to such abolishment. Nor shall Congress at any time prohibit officers of the federal government, or members of Congress, whose duties require them to be in said District, from bringing with them their slaves, and holding them as such, during the time their duties may require them to remain there, and afterwards taking them from the District.

Fifth. Congress shall have no power to prohibit or hinder the transportation of slaves from one State to another, or to a Territory in which slaves are by law permitted to be held, whether that transportation be by land, navigable rivers, or by the sea.

Sixth. In addition to the fugitive slave clause, provide that when a slave has been demanded of the executive authority of the State to which he has fled, if he is not delivered, and the owner permitted to carry him out of the State in peace, that the State so failing to deliver, shall pay to the owner the value of such slave, and such damages as he may have sustained in attempting to reclaim his slave, and secure his right of action in the Supreme Court of the United States, with execution against the property of such State, and of the individual members thereof.

Seventh. No further amendment of the Constitution shall affect the five preceding articles, nor the third paragraph of the second section of the first article of the Constitution, nor the third paragraph of the second section of the fourth article of said Constitution; and no amendments shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize or give to Congress any power to abolish or interfere with slavery in any of the States by whose laws it is or may be allowed or permitted.

Eighth. That slave property shall be rendered secure in transit through, or while temporarily sojourning in the non-slaveholding States or Territories, or in the District of Columbia.

Ninth. An amendment to the effect that all fugitives are to be

deemed those offending the laws within the jurisdiction of the State, and who escape therefrom to other States; and that it is the duty of each State to suppress armed invasions of another State.

4. *Resolved*, That said convention of the slaveholding States, having agreed upon a basis of adjustment satisfactory to themselves, should, in the opinion of this general assembly, refer it to a convention of all the States, slaveholding and non-slaveholding, in the manner following: It should invite all the States friendly to such plan of adjustment to elect delegates in such manner as to reflect the popular will, to assemble in a constitutional convention of all the States, north and south, to be held at Richmond, Virginia, on the — day of February, 1861, to revise and perfect said plan of adjustment for its reference for final ratification and adoption by conventions of the States respectively.

5. *Resolved*, That should a plan of adjustment satisfactory to the south not be acceded to by the requisite number of States to perfect amendments to the Constitution of the United States, it is the opinion of this general assembly that the slaveholding States should adopt for themselves the Constitution of the United States, with such amendments as may be satisfactory to the slaveholding States; and that they should invite into a union with them all States of the north which are willing to abide such amended Constitution and frame of government, severing at once all connexion with States refusing such reasonable guarantees to our future safety—such renewed conditions of federal union being first submitted for ratification to conventions of all the States respectively.

6. *Resolved*, That the governor of Tennessee furnish copies of these resolutions immediately to the governors of the slaveholding and non-slaveholding States.

